



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

For Immediate Release:

Contact: T. Wayne Kirwan, 410-313-2108

wkirwan@howardcountymd.gov

May 17, 2017

Parkville Woman Sentenced to Six Years in Prison for Stealing from Her Employer

A 37-year-old Parkville woman has been sentenced to six years in prison for stealing over \$73,000 from her employer. Mikia C. Gardener, of the 2400 block of Burrige Road, was sentenced by Howard County Circuit Court Judge Timothy J. McCrone on Monday.

Gardener pleaded guilty to a single count of theft between \$10,000 and \$100,000 during a court hearing held on December 21, 2016. Her sentencing was delayed in order to afford her the opportunity to make restitution to her employer but she failed to make any payments.

At the plea hearing last December, Assistant State's Attorney Tricia Cecil told the court that Gardener was employed as a bookkeeper/office manager for a small architectural services firm and its affiliates located in Jessup. After the firm's owner discovered some financial irregularities he contacted the Howard County police.

Detective subpoenaed the records of financial service providers for the firm and identified over \$73,000 in fraudulent purchases. Cecil told the court that Gardener made everyday purchases at retailers and restaurants, and made cash withdrawals from automated teller machines. The prosecutor also detailed larger purchases including: over \$2,600 in entertainment tickets and events; \$2,000 for plastic and reconstructive surgery at a local hospital, \$11,000 for portable on-demand storage container service, and nearly \$3,500 for purchases at a nearby pet store.

At the conclusion of Monday's hearing, Judge McCrone sentenced Gardener to 15 years in prison, suspending all but six years. He also ordered her to be placed on five years of supervised probation upon her eventual release.

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